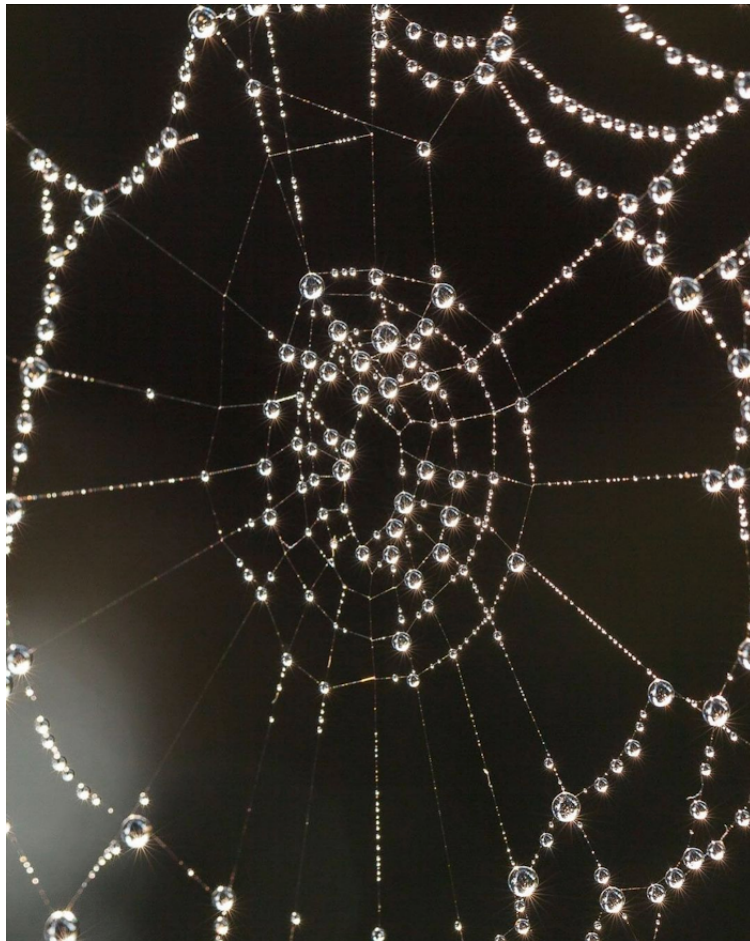


COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF THE **ARTS** | WRITING

FALL 2023



COURSEBOOK

Workshops ■ Seminars ■ Lectures ■ Master Classes

Updated: August 28, 2023

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WORKSHOPS

FICTION – OPEN (6 points)

Hannah Lillith Assadi
Fri., 10am-1pm
Maisy Card
Thu., 5:30pm-8:30pm
Frances Cha
Thu., 10am-1pm
Nicholas Christopher
Thu., 1:10pm-4:10pm
Joshua Furst
Thu., 4:15pm-7:15pm
Joanna Hershon
Thu., 1:10pm-4:10pm
Heidi Julavits
Tue., 1:10pm-4:10pm
Sam Lipsyte
Mon., 1:10pm-4:10pm
Ben Marcus
Tue., 1:10pm-4:10pm
*Matthew Salesses
Tue., 10am-1pm

*Note about Salesses workshop structure:

"We will read four short novels, each in a different form, and write/rewrite the beginning, middle, and ending of a novel four times. In other words, each student will generate four different beginnings, four different middles, and four different endings for a single novel. Students will also be workshoped thrice. This course will require a lot of writing and students should be prepared to explain every craft choice, including those about the identity positions of their characters, the power structures the characters inhabit, the novel's ideal audience(s), and the traditions the novel is working within and against."

NONFICTION – OPEN (6 points)

Jaquira Díaz
Tue., 4:15pm-7:15pm
Wes Enzinna
Tue., 5pm-8pm
Michelle Orange
Mon., 1:10pm-4:10pm
Heather Radke
Wed., 9:30am-12:30pm

NONFICTION – THESIS (9 points)

Second-Years only

Cris Beam
Fri., 1:10pm-4:10pm
Lis Harris
Tue., 1:10pm-4:10pm
Leslie Jamison
Mon., 1:10pm-4:10pm
Wendy S. Walters
Tue., 1:10pm-4:10pm
Kate Zambreno
Mon., 10am-1pm

POETRY – OPEN (6 points)

Mark Bibbins
Thu., 1:10-4:10pm
Timothy Donnelly
Thu., 4:15pm-7:15pm
Shane McCrae
Tue., 10am-1pm
Asiya Wadud
Mon., 4:15pm-7:15pm
Lynn Xu
Tue., 10am-1pm

SEMINARS

Seminars and translation workshops
are 3 points.

(FI) = Fiction (NF) = Nonfiction
(PO) = Poetry (CG) = Cross-Genre
(TR) = Translation

—MONDAY—

Gideon Lewis-Kraus (NF)
Reporting Non-News
Mon., 1:10pm-3:10pm

Yasmine Seale (TR)
Translation Workshop
Mon., 4:15pm-6:45pm

Jaquira Díaz (NF)
*Speculative Nonfiction: Speculation,
Invention, and Innovation*
Mon., 4:15pm-6:15pm

Erroll McDonald (FI)
William Faulkner and World Fiction
Mon., 4:15pm-6:15pm

Keri Bertino (CG)
The Writer as Teacher
Mon., 4:15pm-7:15pm

—TUESDAY—

Monica Ferrell (CG)
*Word and Image: Reading and Writing
Contemporary Poetry for Prose Writers*
Tue., 10am-12pm

Lynn Steger Strong (FI)
Unhinged Narrators
Tue., 10am-12pm

Rivka Galchen (FI)
Science in Literature, Science as Literature
Tue., 10am-12pm

Timothy Donnelly (PO)
Nonsense
Tue., 1:10pm-3:10pm

Leslie Jamison (NF)
Archive Fever
Tue., 1:10pm-3:10pm

Binnie Kirshenbaum (FI)
*The Word, The Sentence, and The
Paragraph*
Tue., 4:15pm-6:15pm

Jeremy Tiang (TR)
*Tracing the Uncanny in Translated
Southeast Asian Literature*
Tue., 4:15pm-6:15pm

Alan Gilbert (CG)
Avant-Garde Writing and Movements
Tue., 4:15pm-6:15pm

B.K. Fischer (CG)
*The Comma Sutra: Grammar, Syntax, and
Praxis*
Tue., 4:15pm-6:15pm

Thom Donovan (CG)
Special Projects Workshop
Tue., 6:30pm-9:30pm

—WEDNESDAY—

Chloé Cooper Jones (NF)
Integrations
Wed., 10am-12pm

—THURSDAY—

Nalini Jones (FI)

Place in Fiction

Wed., 10am-12pm

Ruth Franklin (FI)

Contemporary Politics and the Novel

Wed., 10am-12pm

Lara Vapnyar (FI)

Building a Scene

Wed., 10am-12pm

James Cañón (FI)

*Link 'Em Up! Bridging the Boundary
Between Short Stories and Novels*

Wed., 2pm-4pm

Katrine Øgaard Jensen (TR, PO)

Supernatural Poetics

Wed., 2pm-4pm

Susan Hartman (NF)

Writing About Communities

Wed., 2pm-4pm

Wendy S. Walters (NF)

Climate and Time: Writing in Catastrophe

Wed., 2pm-4pm

Matthew Salesses (FI)

Theory for Writers

Wed., 3pm-5pm

Emily Skillings (PO)

Forms of Attention: Sem. for 1st Year Poets

Wed., 4:15pm-6:15pm

Brigid Hughes (CG)

Editing and the Writer

Wed., 5:10pm-7:10pm

Lis Harris (NF)

Family Matters

Thu., 10am-12pm

Susan Bernofsky (TR)

Translation Workshop

Thu., 10am-12:30pm

Shane McCrae (PO)

How to Read and Write (Meter)

Thu., 10am-12pm

Nicholas Christopher (CG)

Travellers' Tales: Novelists & Poets on the Road

Thu., 10am-12pm

Ben Marcus (FI)

The Future of the Short Story

Thu., 1:10pm-3:10pm

Alice Quinn (PO)

*The Beauty and Power of the Sentence in
Prose and Poetry*

Thu., 2:10pm-4:10pm

Michael Moore (TR)

Translation Workshop

Thu., 4:15pm-6:45pm

—FRIDAY—

Anelise Chen (FI)

*The Scandal of Particularity: Paying
Attention with Annie Dillard's Pilgrim at
Tinker Creek*

Fri., 10am-12pm

Lincoln Michel (FI)

*Architecture of the Unreal: Constructing
Speculative Fiction*

Fri., 10am-12pm

LECTURES

–MONDAY–

Jay Deshpande (PO)
Turning, Leaping, Digressing: A Poet's Taxonomy of Moves
Mon., 10am-12pm

Joshua Cohen (FI)
Story, Plot, Narrative
Mon., 1:10pm-3:10pm

–THURSDAY–

Benjamin Taylor (NF)
Reaping the Whirlwind
Thu., 4:15pm-6:15pm

MASTER CLASSES

—MONDAY—

Sarah Rothenberg

Music and the Writer's Imagination
(1.5 points)

Mon., 10am-12pm
Oct. 23 – Dec. 4

Susie Luo

Surprise Me If You Can (1.5 points)
Mon., 11am-1pm
Oct. 2 – Nov. 13

Evan James

Experiments in Process - Nonfiction (1.5 points)
Wed., 4:15pm-6:15pm
Sep. 13 – Oct. 18

Matvei Yankelevich

Creative (Mis)translation (1 point)
Wed., 4:15pm-6:15pm
Oct. 4 – Oct. 25

Dinitia Smith

Fiction and Memory (1.5 points)
Wed., 4:15pm-6:15pm
Oct. 25 – Dec. 6

—TUESDAY—

Jack Lowery

Living Subjects: A Dilemma (1.5 points)
Tue., 6:30pm-8:30pm
Sep. 12 – Oct. 17

Salvatore Scibona

Mating: A Novel by Norman Rush (1.5 points)
Tue., 6:30pm-8:30pm
Oct. 24 – Dec. 5

Edwin Torres

Room to Roam: Writing the Voice of the Body
(1.5 points)
Wed., 4:15pm-6:15pm
Oct. 25 – Dec. 6

James Wood

Fictional Technique in Novellas and Short Stories (1 point)
Wed., 4:15pm-6:15pm
Nov. 1 – Nov. 29

—WEDNESDAY—

Leonard Schwartz

Mythography: Writing and the Mythopoetic
(1.5 points)
Wed., 10am-12pm
Sep. 6 – Sep. 22 (Also Fridays)

Mychal Denzel Smith

The Personal Essay and its Discontents (1.5 points)
Wed., 10am-12pm
Sep. 27 – Nov. 1

Matthew Burgess

Serious Play: Teaching Imaginative Writing to Young People (1.5 points)
Wed., 4:15pm-6:15pm
Sep. 13 – Oct. 18

—THURSDAY—

Lilly Dancyger

Hybrid Memoir (1.5 points)
Thu., 12:05pm-2:05pm
Oct. 26 – Dec. 7

—FRIDAY—

Leonard Schwartz

Mythography: Writing and the Mythopoetic
(1.5 points)
Fri., 1:10pm-3:10pm
Sep. 6 – Sep. 22 (Also Wednesdays)

Dennard Dayle

Black Comedy (1.5 points)

Fri., 1:10pm-3:10pm

Oct. 27 – Dec. 8

Amy Grace Loyd

The Editing Cycle (1.5 points)

Fri., 1:10pm-3:10pm

Oct. 27 – Dec. 8

SEMINARS

Keri Bertino

The Writer as Teacher

(CROSS-GENRE)

Mon., 4:15pm-7:15pm

This class, for students with an interest in teaching creative writing in any setting, takes as a starting point two foundational questions of writing pedagogy: “Can writing be taught?” and “Is it possible to teach English so that people stop killing each other?” Together, we’ll develop more (and more-nuanced) inquiries in response to these questions, and seek to answer them through our exploration of the theories, practices, and contexts of teaching creative writing. Primary topics include fundamentals of both general and writing pedagogy (including process, creativity, and growth mindset), assignment and course design, creating classroom communities, responding to student writing, the workshop, and exploration of varied sites of creative writing both in-person and online. We’ll also take up broader questions of the role of the artist and teacher in communities, issues of professionalization, and the ways that practices of teaching and writing inform and fortify one another.

James Cañón

Link ‘Em Up! Bridging the Boundary Between Short Stories and Novels

(FICTION)

Wed., 2pm-4pm

Is it a collection of short stories? Is it a novel? Actually, it’s both! This seminar will focus on highly acclaimed short story cycles, or collections of linked stories, or novels-in-stories, or composite novels — call them by whatever name you like — those books made up of individual narratives that stand alone as short stories, with all the intensity that the form entails, but are connected so the book achieves an aggregate, novelistic force, a collection that adds up to something even more compelling than the power of its component parts. We’ll look at works by Gloria Naylor, Sherwood Anderson, Julia Álvarez, Daniyal Mueenuddin, and Sherman Alexie, among others. We’ll explore organizing around place, character, theme, and event. We’ll look at using repetition of landscape and objects to maximize emotional impact. We’ll delve into long and short timeframes — how one approaches writing a multi-generational linked cycle versus a cycle of stories that occurs in a day. We’ll focus on the importance of plot: how throughlines and lines of tension function in both individual stories and through a linked collection. Lastly, we’ll consider connection and disconnection in relation to broader questions of identity and community.

Anelise Chen

The Scandal of Particularity: Paying Attention with Annie Dillard's *Pilgrim at Tinker Creek*

(CROSS-GENRE)

Fri., 10am-12pm

Annie Dillard was only in her twenties when she began writing what would become the nature writing classic *Pilgrim at Tinker Creek*, which won the Pulitzer Prize in 1975. Over several seasons, she took her notebook to the creek and paid close attention to the muskrats, water bugs, and birds, focusing on the miraculous minutiae of the material world, and compiled what Thoreau might have called “a meteorological journal of the mind.” With a child’s capacity for awe, Dillard captured what she found to be holy and singular about nature, and reveled in the “scandal of particularity” that so bedeviled theologians. “Why, we might as well ask, not a plane tree, instead of a bo?” Dillard wonders. “I never saw a tree that was no tree in particular.” Since its publication, *Pilgrim* has inspired generations of writers who return to it for its commitment to specificity and its joyous prose. What does the moon look like? Like “a smudge of chalk,” or “softly frayed, like the heel of a sock.” What do you call the shedding of leaves in fall? “A striptease.” What does cold air do? “Bites [one’s] nose like pepper.” (And so on.)

In this cross-genre seminar, we will read *Pilgrim at Tinker Creek* and use the book as a guiding text to hone our own faculties of attention, observational writing skills, and descriptive ability. We will work and rework our descriptions so that no tree is just a tree, and no sunset is just a sunset. The output of this course will not be stories, essays, or poems, but rather, lists of descriptions of oranges, the texture of bark, weather, and a repertoire of new vocabulary words for describing colors and materials. Weekly exercises will prompt us to become nature writers in the city: we will stalk pigeons, inventory trash and weeds, study maps of buried streams, and examine a drop of puddle water through a microscope. We will dissect Dillard’s prose to see how she puts her words together to achieve various effects. We will compile lists of active verbs and make our sentences somersault and sing. Though taking inspiration from *Pilgrim* and based in the natural world, the exercises in this class are meant to carry over into other kinds of writing; paying close attention is an asset no matter what the subject matter. Field trips will include a walk in Riverside Park, a visit to the Greenpoint Sewage Plant, and an optional day-trip to the Beinecke Library to see the Annie Dillard papers.

Nicholas Christopher

Travellers’ Tales: Novelists & Poets on the Road

(CROSS-GENRE)

Thu., 10am-12pm

Travel writings by novelists and poets reflect how their worldly journeys fed into and often mirrored their artistic lives. We will examine how the geography of the imagination meshes vitally with the geography of the world at large, discussing the respective writers’ fiction and/or poetry in conjunction with their travel books. The reading list is international and thematically varied, as is the approach each writer took to “travel.” We will explore what exactly that meant to them, and which of many narrative approaches they chose: memoir, diary, travelogue, adventure story, spiritual quest, personal journey, cultural/historical essay, or some combination thereof. The styles are eclectic, as exemplified by the two writers who alternated between prose and poetry in a single text.

Each week there will be a short student presentation. A single paper will be required at the end of the term: a formal proposal (including a brief sample chapter or introduction) for a travel book—informed by all the varieties we have explored—the student might want to write.

Readings:

In Patagonia, Bruce Chatwin

Tell My Horse, Zora Neale Hurston

Running in the Family, Michael Ondaatje

Black Lamb and Grey Falcon (selections), Rebecca West

The Narrow Road to the Deep North, Bashô

The Voices of Marrakesh, Elias Canetti

The Coldest Winter, Paula Fox

My Journey to Lhasa, Alexandra David-Neel

The Colossus of Maroussi, Henry Miller

Etruscan Places, D.H. Lawrence

Journey to the Land of the Flies, Aldo Buzzi

American Diary, Italo Calvino

Mani, Patrick Leigh Fermor

The Snow Leopard, Peter Matthiessen

Chloé Cooper Jones

Integrations

(NONFICTION)

Wed., 10am-12pm

This course will focus on the ways nonfiction writing can be enriched and elevated through the integration of and engagement with various forms of visual art, literature, poetry, theory, and philosophy. Together, we will explore how to incorporate these diverse sources into nonfiction writing to create compelling, thought-provoking works.

Engagement in the work of others can push us to explore realms of thought, form, and aesthetic opportunities that we would not arrive at alone. However, it can also be a way of protecting, deferring, or obfuscating the writer-self. This class will look closely at the challenges and pitfalls of such integrations and interrogate their effectiveness in our own work. We will also study the demands of different forms—essays, criticism, memoir, arts writing, etc.—and how integrations serve each form in different ways.

Through a combination of readings, discussions, and writing exercises, students will learn how to use the art of others to enrich their own writing. This course will also address ethical concerns when integrating other people's works and how to give proper credit. We will read a wide-range writers

including Plato, Aristotle, Rigoberta Menchú, James Baldwin, Leslie Jamison, Maggie Nelson, Ben Lerner, Zadie Smith, Geoff Dyer, Erich Auerbach, Rachel Aviv, Patti Smith, Emmanuel Carrère, Annie Ernaux, Merve Emre, Vivian Gornick, and others.

Jaquira Díaz

Speculative Nonfiction: Speculation, Invention, and Innovation

(NONFICTION)

Mon., 4:15pm-6:15pm

Most often, creative nonfiction deals with truth and reality. But there is room in nonfiction for speculation, imagination, experimentation, and invention. We'll discuss work that moves beyond narration, reportage, and interrogation toward speculation: work that builds upon and expands the nascent genre of Speculative Nonfiction in innovative ways, work that imagines what else might be possible, considering alternate histories and realities, sometimes working with metaphor rather than the literal, considering the use of the fictional in creative nonfiction, and suggesting new ways of seeing and thinking about truth in the essay and other nonfiction forms. We'll explore the poetics of haunting, writing the mystical and the "Otherworldly," and other speculative possibilities. Readings may include Sofia Samatar, Carmen Maria Machado, Maxine Hong Kingston, Saidiya Hartman, Ingrid Rojas Contreras, Kathryn Nuernberger, Jo Ann Beard, etc.

This is a graduate craft and critical reading course, and together we'll focus on reading, discussion of works of speculative nonfiction, and generating new work. We will examine speculative memoir, essay, cultural criticism, and other speculative forms, with a particular focus on craft, but we'll also be discussing questions of ethics and research. Students are expected to read all assigned materials and actively engage in critical discussions every class meeting, think critically and creatively about how to contribute to a larger conversation about craft, and think about how to incorporate **invention, innovation, and speculation** into their own work.

Timothy Donnelly

Nonsense

(POETRY)

Tue., 1:10pm-3:10pm

Almost everywhere there is happiness there is pleasure in nonsense

—Nietzsche

And if logic can't prevail, perhaps hilarity can, as an attribute of a revolutionary practice of everyday life, dismantling control and reforming connectivity.

—Lyn Hejinian

In this seminar we will use the word "nonsense" as an umbrella term for a wide array of artistic practices that challenge normative modes of meaning making or seek to defy common-sense reasoning. Readings will range from Aristophanes' comedy *The Birds*, both for its fantastical "collision and collusion of signifiers" (Gregory Dobrov) as well as for its depiction of birdsong, to William Benton's concrete poetry collection *Birds* (1972), in which each poem is presented as "a

visual event.” We will start with a review of the fundamentals of semiotics to remember how sense is made in the first place, with specific emphasis on the Saussurean model and such key rhetorical tropes as irony, metonymy, synecdoche, and especially metaphor—which Lacan says “occurs at the precise point at which sense emerges from nonsense.” In addition to our appreciation of the various aesthetic motives (and pleasures) of subverting sense, we will likewise embrace Susan Stewart’s definition of nonsense not as meaninglessness but as the antipode (or even antidote) to common sense as well as the politics of writing as “a constant disruption of the means of semantic production.” (Fred Moten) We will consider the place of nonsense in the thought of Nietzsche, Bergson, Wittgenstein, and especially Cixous, whose concept of *l’écriture féminine* promises to “erase the divisions between speech and text, between order and chaos, between sense and nonsense,” as well as in the early work of Deleuze, whose study *Logic and Sense* draws a crucial distinction between the playful “nonsense of the surface” of Lewis Carroll and the terrifying “nonsense of depth” of Antonin Artaud.

In addition to those mentioned above, specific texts and topics are likely to include Ludwig Tieck’s *Puss in Boots* as a precursor to the Theatre of the Absurd; Victorian champions of nonsense such as Carroll himself and Edward Lear, as well as the latter’s echo in the Modernist, feminist work of Stevie Smith; Arthur Rimbaud’s “disordering of all the senses” and the studious hallucinations of his prose poetry (in John Ashbery’s translation); the relationship between nonsense and melancholy; William James’s “stream of consciousness” and the empire of Gertrude Stein; Alfred Jarry, his parodic ‘pataphysics, and its influence on Dada, Surrealism, and the OuLiPo, with an emphasis on the short fiction of Leonora Carrington and Georges Perec’s *An Attempt at Exhausting a Place in Paris*; Federico García Lorca’s theory of the duende as “a mysterious force that everyone feels and no philosopher has explained”; the possibilities of the baroque and its “excess of signification” and “madness of vision” (Nadir Lahiji), including the “extravagant verbiage” (Rita Dove) of Melvin B. Tolson’s *Harlem Gallery*; Langston Hughes’ *Montage of a Dream Deferred* and the “nonsense of bebop”; nonsense as a way of “figuring the unfigurable” (JA Mitchell); disproportion as a measure of fatal/futile desire in Wilde’s *Salomé*, Ferenc Juhász’s “The Boy Changed into a Stag Clamors at the Gate of Secrets,” and elsewhere; “the overabundance of the signifier” (Byung-Chul Han) as a characteristic of ritual; Beckett’s *Waiting for Godot* in tandem with Camus’ “The Myth of Sisyphus”; certain practices associated with Language poetry, including homophonic translations of David Melnick’s *Men in Aida* and others; Lyn Hejinian’s *The Unfollowing* and its potent “rejection of the logic of mortality and of capitalism”; Harryette Mullen’s “ruses of the lunatic muse”; Roland Barthes’s *The Pleasure of the Text*; and a look at what Flarf was, and why. Each student will submit six short writing assignments as well as provide a brief presentation on one of the topics of our study at some point during the semester.

Monica Ferrell

Word and Image: Reading and Writing Poetry for Prose Writers

(CROSS-GENRE)

Tue, 10am-12pm

Open to Fiction and Nonfiction students only. This is a workshop-format course in the reading and writing of poetry for students of fiction and creative nonfiction. With a focus on contemporary poetry, we will discuss various approaches to how to read a poem, and examine a range of aesthetics including modernism, formalism, confessional writing, the New York School, and hybridity. We will

also discuss free and formal verse, the prose poem, and the lyric essay. Topics explored will include music and sound, word choice, imagery, line-break and stanza-break, repetition, syntax, silence and the unsaid, and poetic closure. We will attempt to write a new poem each week, as we consider work by such authors as Wallace Stevens, Sylvia Plath, John Ashbery, Mark Strand, Claudia Rankine, Inger Christensen, Terrance Hayes, Aditi Machado, Cynthia Cruz, and Jericho Brown.

B.K. Fischer

The Comma Sutra: Grammar, Syntax, and Praxis

(CROSS-GENRE)

Tue., 4:15pm-6:15pm

This course aims to convince the skeptic that even if Gertrude Stein was mistaken in saying “I really do not know that anything has ever been more exciting than diagramming sentences,” grammar is at least the second most fulfilling human pursuit. Fundamental to our exploration will be a study of grammatical terminology and principles as an anatomy lab for language—a method for exposing its inner workings, mechanisms, and connective tissues to understand more fully its capacities and effects. This technical scrutiny will give rise to discussion of a variety of topics relevant to creative practice in poetry and prose, including patterns of syntax, point of view, polysemy, closure, disjunction, the non sequitur, parataxis and hypotaxis, deixis, the subjunctive, vernaculars, and code-switching. Our analysis of grammar will dovetail with theoretical perspectives beyond subject and predicate, drawing insights from linguistics, cultural studies, feminist theory, race theory, ethics, activist politics, aesthetics, and media studies. We will dissect and revel in sentences by Virginia Woolf, Claudia Rankine, Henry James, Nathaniel Mackey, Marilynne Robinson, Emily Dickinson, Teju Cole, Jorie Graham, Taiye Selasi, Layli Long Soldier, and Vampire Weekend, among many other writers, and read essays by Nietzsche, M. NourbeSe Philip, Cecilia Vicuña, Gloria Anzaldúa, Hélène Cixous, Giorgio Agamben, Lyn Hejinian, and others. Taking the form of a sutra—texts threaded together to build a working manual—the course will focus in every class on how grammatical ideas are vital to writing praxis. Participants will write seven one-page responses to extend the seminar’s conversation, one of which must include graphic or visual (or any non-linguistic) elements, and a final paper of approximately five pages.

Ruth Franklin

Contemporary Politics and the Novel

(FICTION)

Wed., 10am-12pm

Jane Eyre is a document of British imperialism. *Heart of Darkness* depicts Africans as savages. *To Kill a Mockingbird* embodies the white savior complex. *Lolita* glorifies pedophilia and rape. If you follow contemporary literary culture, you’ve heard critiques like these—and you may not know quite what to make of them. Is it possible to appreciate a work of art while finding aspects of it politically or morally offensive? Should socially retrograde novels be cast aside to make way for a more diverse and inclusive literary canon? Is it mistaken to judge classics by contemporary standards? In this class, we’ll reread these novels and others, taking into account their position at the crossroads of politics and literature while thinking through these essential questions. Content warning: materials used in this class, unavoidably, will contain racial and ethnic slurs.

Rivka Galchen

Science in Literature, Science as Literature

(CROSS-GENRE, FICTION)

Tue., 10am-12pm

In this course we'll look at the ways the at the possibilities of scientific language and ideas in literature. The texts we will look at will range from scientific treatises to science fiction; poems, essays and stories about nature; stories with 'mad' or 'heroic' scientists as characters; and writing that might at first appear unrelated to scientific thinking, including folk tales and detective fiction. Students will also be responsible for four short creative assignments related to the reading, as well as a brief in-class presentation.

Alan Gilbert

Avant-Garde Writing and Movements

(CROSS-GENRE)

Tue, 4:15pm-6:15pm

With an emphasis on poetry, but also including nonfiction, fiction, and hybrid texts, this seminar will chart the history of twentieth-century avant-garde literature. We will begin briefly with the origins of the avant-garde in the nineteenth century with Charles Baudelaire, Arthur Rimbaud, Emily Dickinson, Walt Whitman, and Lautréamont, and then examine various avant-garde, experimental, and non-mainstream literary movements and aesthetics, including Symbolism, Imagism, Futurism, Dadaism, Surrealism, Harlem Renaissance, Négritude, Black Arts Movement, Black Mountain School, Beats, New York School, feminism, cross-cultural poetics, spoken word, rap, Language poetry, concrete poetry, and more. We will end by focusing on recent trends such as Flarf, Conceptual writing, and digital work. Along the way, we will pause to talk more extensively about important figures in this history such as Gertrude Stein, William Burroughs, Amiri Baraka, Édouard Glissant, and Adrienne Rich, as well as read the work of a few younger writers. We will also reference parallel developments in twentieth-century avant-garde art, film, and performance.

Lis Harris

Family Matters

(NONFICTION)

Thu., 10am-12pm

This course is an exploration of a wide spectrum of literary approaches to writing about the people who gave you life and then made it glorious or a living hell—and about those who huddled alongside in the primal pack. We will closely examine some of the aesthetic, ethical, and research issues that arise from writing about family as well as the novelistic, meditative, and lyric strategies that can expand this subject's breadth and depth. Authors—of nonfiction and fiction—whose work we will read include Mary McCarthy (*Memories of a Catholic Girlhood*), Philip Roth (*Patrimony*), William Maxwell (*So Long, See You Tomorrow*), Colette (*My Mother's House; Sido*), Tobias Wolff (*This Boy's Life*),

Paula Fox (*Borrowed Finery*), Per Petterson (*Out Stealing Horses*), Michael Ondaatje (*Running In the Family*), Vladimir Nabokov (*Speak, Memory*), and Adrian Nicole LeBlanc (*Random Family*).

Susan Hartman

Writing About Communities

(NONFICTION)

Wed., 2pm-4pm

In this class, students will learn feature writing techniques—how to interview, report on and structure a story--as they explore a small community outside campus. New York City can be seen as a galaxy of tiny communities: a group of domino players, a butcher shop, a street vendor who repairs watches. We will discuss: How do you gain access to a closely-knit community? How do you establish trust? How do you ask difficult questions? And how do you report during a pandemic?

We will look at selected readings by veteran journalists and authors. Our definition of community will be broad: We will read about communities shaped by danger, by altruism, and by loneliness. Students will learn how to find a sharp focus--an invisible thread--for their own reported piece. By the last class, students will have completed a draft of a feature story. (Word length depends on scope; 1200 word max.)

Brigid Hughes

Editing and the Writer

(CROSS-GENRE)

Wed., 5:10pm-7:10pm

This course will examine the past, present, and future of literary magazines, from the perspectives of both the editor and the writer. We will analyze specific issues by magazines such as *The Paris Review*, *Granta*, *Monkey Business*, *Noon*, *Evergreen Review*, *Callaloo*, *Triquarterly*, and others. We will discuss the elements that distinguish a magazine, including unifying themes, layout and design, and criteria for the selection process. The editorial relationships between known editors and writers will also be examined. Assignments will include exercises in editing, graphics selection, and assessing work from various sources. By the end of the seminar, you will develop a mission statement and create a sample issue. This seminar is designed for writers who are interested in the editorial side of publishing, and how editor-writer relationships would shape their work.

Leslie Jamison

Archive Fever

(NONFICTION)

Tue., 1:10pm-3:10pm

Archives are records of minds and bodies and secrets. They are full of surprises: the cigarette burns marking John Berryman's 12-step inventories; the jam-sticky fingerprints of Marilynne Robinson's toddler son in her composition books, where novel fragments live alongside grocery lists; the instructions to Jean Rhys's caregivers to put more ice cubes in her evening tumblers of whiskey, the postcards sent from 19th-century sanitarium patients to beloveds living elsewhere. In this course, we

will be exploring the allure of the archives—their enchantments, their tyrannies, their obfuscations, their practicalities, their labyrinthine passageways—and thinking about how creative work can incorporate archival research in surprising and dynamic ways. Archives are necessarily incomplete, and their gaps are just as resonant as their records; speaking histories of power and silencing.

In addition to reading critical and creative work that draws from archival research, we will be visiting a number of archives across New York City, including the Morgan Library, the New York Public Library, the Schomburg Center, the Fales Library at NYU, and the New York Academy of Medicine, as well as our own Rare Books and Manuscripts Library here at Columbia. Over the course of the semester, each student will produce a piece of creative writing that draws on sustained engagement with a particular set of archival materials. Our readings will range across genres—creative nonfiction, fiction, poetry—including Kiki Petrosino, M. NourbeSe Philip, Karen Green, Maggie Nelson, Saidiya Hartman, Arlette Farge, and Mark Nowak.

Note: Because many of our classes will occur off-site, it will not be feasible for students to take courses that end immediately before this seminar begins, or begin right after it ends. Please schedule accordingly. Thank you!

Katrine Øgaard Jensen

Supernatural Poetics

(CROSS-GENRE, TRANSLATION)

Wed., 2pm-4pm

The term Supernatural derives from the Medieval Latin *supernaturalis* ("above or beyond nature, divine"), from the Latin *super* "above" and *natura*, "nature." This seminar will explore how poets and writers from around the world have imagined alternate realities and worlds, linguistic inventions, and new poetic expressions inspired by ideas beyond scientific understanding or the laws of nature. We will discuss what these works might tell us about the cultural and political contexts in which they were conceived, as well as what the transcendent imaginings of supernatural literature might teach us about writing into the unknown. In parallel and addition, we will in this seminar explore supernatural modes of translation and creation, from CAConrad's crystal-translation of Shakespeare to Don Mee Choi's trance-lations and Yeats's conversations with ghosts, as well as Paul Legault's conversations with Yeats's ghost translated into poems. No prior experience with translation or divination is required for this seminar.

Topics will include angelic encounters and the language of angels, demonology and depictions of the underworld, cryptozoology and imaginary beings, occult writing and translation practices, the afterlife, xenopoetics, myth and muses, prophecies/poetic visions, and ghosts as apparitions of identity, collective memory, and witness.

Course reading will include work by Kim Hyesoon, Don Mee Choi, Reza Negarestani, Tanella Boni, Gabriel García Márquez, Alejandra Pizarnik, Eva Kristina Olsson, Johannes Göransson, Alice Notley, Jorge Luis Borges, Mariana Enríquez, Victor LaValle, W. B. Yeats, Rainer Maria Rilke, CAConrad, Diana Khoi Nguyen, Bruno K. Öijer, and others.

Nalini Jones

Place in Fiction

(FICTION)

Wed., 10am-12pm

Eudora Welty wrote that "Place is one of the lesser angels that watch over the racing hand of fiction." Through readings from around the world, this course will explore how a sense of place contributes to characterization, plotting, and what Welty calls "feeling." Students will experiment with different ways to funnel the smells, sounds, and sights of a place into language, and to address the challenge of creating whole worlds--real, reenvisioned, or imagined--in which their characters may struggle or thrive.

Binnie Kirshenbaum

The Word, The Sentence, and The Paragraph

(FICTION)

Tue., 4:15pm-6:15pm

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God

John; King James Bible; 1:1

(This quotation is based solely on its content. The source is irrelevant to the seminar.)

In this craft seminar we will begin by considering words in isolation and devoid of context. What makes one stand-alone word evocative, lively, vivid, visual, and fresh? Conversely, why are some words dull, flat, hackneyed, and lazy? We'll look at the differences between words with Latinate roots and those with Germanic roots, and how English is enriched by incorporating words from other languages. Can we invent new words? We'll discover words that we'd never heretofore encountered, and that reading the dictionary is both enlightening and fun.

When a sentence successfully conveys meaning and intent, isn't that the whole of it? No, not if we want to write memorable sentences that are, unto themselves, works of art. Good sentences sharpen detail and imagery, reveal character, enhance the narrative voice, and pop off the page. How do metaphors and similes clarify meaning, create beauty, and heighten comic and tragic effects? How does the rearrangement of syntax disrupt monotony, as well as bring order to events as they unfold? Can we break the rules of conventional grammar and style? Do our sentences make music?

Which of our sentences is best suited to open a paragraph, and which of them might end it with a punch? Have we essentially said the same thing twice, and if so, how do we decide which of the two (or more) should be eliminated, and which should we keep? Or is the repetition of words and sentences within a paragraph a deliberate stylistic choice, or is it the byproduct of not paying close attention? Do the sentences contained in a paragraph move smoothly from one to the next? We will also assess the flow of dialogue. Does it sound authentic without being authentic? Does it move the story forward and /or illuminate character?

These questions, among others, will be addressed in class discussion and put into practice with in-class exercises and homework to be shared with the group.

Books required are Webster's *New Collegiate Dictionary* (9th Edition Preferred) and *Roget's International Thesaurus* (7th Edition Preferred).

Gideon Lewis-Kraus

Reporting Non-News

(NONFICTION)

Mon., 1:10-3:10pm

This seminar looks at information-gathering for writers, with particular emphasis on non-news—that is, information that cannot exclusively or interestingly be gathered inside one’s house, via email, or over the telephone. It examines attitudes about and practices of reporting in light of the assumption that what people say and do explicitly is not necessarily of greater relevance than how they said or did it, what they were wearing at the time, what the weather was like that day, and how the listener happened to feel about what was said or done. The class will dwell on actual information-gathering skills—which approaches tend to yield greater or lesser quantities of the varieties of useful information—but will (for the most part) reject the following ideas: that reporting and writing are distinct rather than interrelated elements of the process; that reportorial skills are innate, or are trade secrets, or can be dismissed as “mere” practical techniques of no use to the pure of heart; and that reporting for memoir or first-person rumination or fiction is somehow different in kind from reporting more traditional magazine stories. Readings will in turn be drawn from contemporary feature journalism, sociology, fiction, and possibly poetry, and may or may not include such writers as Grace Paley, Larissa MacFarquhar, Howard S. Becker, Janet Malcolm, Jia Tolentino, Ben Lerner, Nikole Hannah-Jones, Anne Carson, Katherine Boo, Rachel Kaadzi Ghansah, Kenneth Tynan, Elif Batuman, Rachel Aviv, and Tracy Kidder.

Ben Marcus

The Future of the Short Story

(FICTION)

Thu., 1:10pm-3:10pm

In this seminar, we will explore the potential of the short story, focusing on deepening our practice and testing our individual artistic ambition. Our readings will mostly consist of works published in the last twenty years, designed to reveal the vast range and possibility of the form. In addition to a few influential stories that have left their mark on many practicing writers, we will read some lesser-known stories that might have something to show us still. Our aim is to scrutinize techniques such as voice, point of view, character, plot, setting, time, and conflict, among other integral components of a story, and wonder how they might be brought to bear in our own work. We will try to understand how each story was made, leaving room for mystery and uncertainty, while systematically adding to our writerly toolkits. Through this process, we hope to improve our command of the short story form and progress towards realizing our unique literary visions.

Among the writers we will read: Nana Kwame Adjei-Brenyah, Carmen Maria Machado, Ted Chiang, Kelly Link, Nafissa Thompson-Spires, Charles Yu, Ottessa Moshfegh, Lydia Davis, Bryan Washington, Miranda July, Ling Ma, and Kazuo Ishiguro.

Shane McCrae

How to Read and Write (Meter)

(POETRY)

Thu., 10am-12pm

Besides wanting to know more about poetry, I started studying meter as an undergraduate for two reasons, and I will now confess to you what those were: 1. If I ever found myself, via time machine, act of God, or witch's/wizard's spell, forced to live my life in the 18th century, or the 17th century, etc., in England, I would still like to be a poet, and so I needed to understand meter; 2. I wanted Auden—whose poetry I didn't much read at the time, and anyway he was dead—I wanted Auden to respect me. And yet, my decision to study meter has been one the best and most important decisions I have ever made for my writing, second only to my decision to read everything I possibly could. Studying meter opened the poems I was writing and reading, and introduced me to a freedom I didn't know I was missing. And studying meter can do the same for you. In this seminar we will learn how to recognize and write in meter through studying handbooks on meter and poems in meter, and we will write our own rad and fun metrical poems.

Erroll McDonald

William Faulkner and World Fiction

(FICTION)

Mon., 4:15pm-6:15pm

Nobel Prize winner Gabriel Garcia Marquez unabashedly claims William Faulkner as “my master,” says that “Faulkner is present in all the novels of Latin America,” and mischievously insists that “*The Hamlet* is the best South American novel ever written.” Since the 1950s, other major writers from around the world have similarly trumpeted the crucial influence of Faulkner on their writing. Why? What about Faulkner excited their imagination and inspired their work, allowing them to achieve their own singularities? This course aims to elucidate not only Faulkner's formal inventions and literary techniques but his social and moral concerns, so as to examine how they inform such writers as Patrick Chamoiseau (Martinique), Gabriel Garcia Marquez (Colombia), Antonio Lobo Antunes (Portugal), Toni Morrison (United States), Juan Rulfo (Mexico), and Kateb Yacine (Algeria).

Among the works we will read are: Faulkner's *Absalom, Absalom!*, *As I Lay Dying*, *Light in August*, *Sanctuary*, and *The Sound and the Fury*; Chamoiseau's *Solibo Magnificent*; Garcia Marquez's *The Autumn of the Patriarch*; Lobo Antunes's *Act of the Damned*; Morrison's *Beloved*; Rulfo's *Pedro Paramo*; and Yacine's *Nedjma*. The course will conclude with a reading of selections from *Faulkner, Mississippi*, meditations upon the writer by Martinican poet and critic Edouard Glissant.

The course requirements are: a short (three-to-five-page) piece of literary criticism on a clearly defined topic to be determined in consultation with the instructor—this essay will be orally presented to the class—and a twelve-to-fifteen-page final exercise in imitation of any writer covered during the semester.

Lincoln Michel

Architecture of the Unreal: Constructing Speculative Fiction

(FICTION)

Fri., 10am-12pm

How do we build the impossible? What scaffolding supports the surreal? This seminar will examine the forms, effects, and structures of speculative fiction. We'll look at the shapes of fairy tales with Angela Carter and Donald Barthelme. We'll study how SF worlds are built (and destroyed) with Octavia Butler, Italo Calvino, and Ursula K. Le Guin. We'll examine the psychological effects of terror and the uncanny with Sigmund Freud, Franz Kafka, and Shirley Jackson. After investigating the forms of the fantastic and the futuristic, we'll use our blueprints to create our own works in class.

Tentative reading list includes:

The Bloody Chamber by Angela Carter
Cosmicomics by Italo Calvino
Fifteen Dogs by André Alexis
The Haunting of Hill House by Shirley Jackson
Stories of Your Life and Others by Ted Chiang
Piranesi by Susanna Clarke
Fever Dream by Samanta Schweblin
The Lathe of Heaven by Ursula K. Le Guin

As well as essays or short fiction from Kelly Link, Tzvetan Todorov, Kate Bernheimer, Brian Evenson, Ann Radcliffe, E.T.A. Hoffmann, Samuel Delany, and others.

Alice Quinn

The Beauty and Power of the Sentence in Prose and Poetry

(POETRY)

Thu., 2:10pm-4:10pm

The variety and splendor of the sentence in English is a wonder to behold.

The sentence is a prime vessel of the flow and shape of thought and a bedrock element of the poetry and prose honored and enjoyed in our language.

In this class we will explore the syntactic glory of sentence structure and composition in the work of a variety of great writers: George Herbert and James Baldwin, Emily Dickinson and Henry James, Ralph Waldo Emerson and Virginia Woolf, Walt Whitman, Robert Frost, Elizabeth Bishop, Lucille Clifton, Janet Malcolm, and a number of superb younger writers.

Our guests— who will explore with us the work of authors whose sentences they love— include Vidyan Ravinthiran, a distinguished poet and scholar of prose structure who teaches at Harvard, Jo Ann Beard, author of several celebrated collections of memoir and hybrid memoir/story including *The Boys of My Youth* and *Festival Days*, and award-winning poet Atsuro Riley, author of the collections *Romey's Order* and *Heard-Hoard*.

There will be ample opportunity for everyone in the seminar to embark on new work— essay, poem, or story— reflecting the influence of the writers we discuss and our in-depth exploration of the beauty and power of the sentence in prose and poetry.

Matthew Salesses

Theory for Writers

(FICTION, CROSS-GENRE)

Wed., 3pm-5pm

Literature—in addition to language, philosophy, politics, culture, nature, religion, life—is all about desire. How do we “read” and “write” desire more productively? This course will require close reading of theory and may serve as an introduction to theory as it concerns a life of making art, of making something out of desire. We will read fewer books more slowly, with one final, creative assignment. Possible authors include Anne Carson, Byung-chul Han, Alain de Botton, Audre Lorde, Jonathan Lear, Plato.

Emily Skillings

Forms of Attention

(POETRY)

Wed., 4:15pm-6:15pm

First-year Poetry students are strongly encouraged to take this class.

Poetry is a soul inaugurating a form. — Pierre-Jean Jouve

“Attention,” wrote philosopher Simone Weil, “is the rarest and purest form of generosity.” In this course—which is highly encouraged for all first-year poets—we will examine how attention informs how (and what) we notice, as well as the forms we create and inhabit. Poets will use the semester to develop their own private and shared practices, turning their attention toward poems, texts, and other artworks that will provoke their own constantly shifting poetics.

Some topics we might explore: neurodiversity and form; reading as writing; the leap; hacking writer’s block; strange images; silence; the margin; benefits of inattention, digression, and distraction; somatics; the notebook; the unspeakable; rituals and routines; beginnings and endings; ekphrasis; stanza and line; the epistolary mode; the sonnet; creative revision; hybrid forms.

Enrolled students will write and revise a small portfolio of poems in response to weekly prompts and complete a longer self-guided project of 5-10 pages. Working in small groups/pairings will be an integral part of class participation. **This is the only class in which first-year poets will meet with their entire cohort.**

Lynn Steger Strong

Unhinged Narrators

(FICTION)

Tue., 10am-12pm

In the Lydia Davis short story “Fear” an unnamed woman runs out of her house every night, “overcoat flapping wildly” and screams “Emergency, Emergency,” until someone from the neighborhood comes to calm her fears. The end of the story reads thusly, “We know she is making it up; nothing has really happened to her. But we understand, because there is hardly one of us who has not been moved at some time to do just what she has done, and every time, it has taken all our strength, and even the strength of our friends and families too, to quiet us.” In this class, we will look at books with narrators who run wildly out of their houses in their nightclothes, who scream and yell and break things, obsessives, those who have been institutionalized or committed heinous acts. We will examine the particular privilege of literature to be able to not pathologize, but, perhaps, instead, to explore the ways that those that might at first seem to suffer from pathologies might also teach us about the pathologies of the wider world. We will look at the particular craft of portraying narrators that might feel alienating or off-putting, narrators who, were we perhaps to meet them on the street, might make us want to run away. We will explore and discuss the tools through which these same narrators, in the particular space of fiction, might instead become accessible and engaging to us, might in fact teach us about ourselves.

Jeremy Tiang

Tracing the Uncanny in Translated Southeast Asian Literature

(TRANSLATION)

Tue., 4:15pm-6:15pm

Relatively under-explored in the Anglophone world, the literature of Southeast Asia is a rich tapestry that draws from a multitude of traditions. This seminar takes in readings from across the region, putting them in conversation with each other with a particular focus on the use of the uncanny. How are these writers using the supernatural and surreal to push against societal norms, and what political messages are being smuggled into the narratives under this guise? We will also look at translation strategies that might be employed with books such as these, for which many Western readers lack context.

Lara Vapnyar

Building a Scene

(FICTION)

Wed., 10am-12pm

Individual scenes are important building blocks of any prose narrative, yet the craft of designing a scene is often neglected by aspiring writers. In this class we will study all the aspects of designing a successful scene: setting, inner plot, inner structure, spotlight on the characters, P.O.V., choreography of physical movement, and dialogue. We will study how to write sex scenes, death scenes, party scenes, battle scenes, and nature scenes. The readings will include Tolstoy, Ferrante, Bolaño, Proulx, Munro, Waters, and Wallace.

Wendy S. Walters

Climate and Time: Writing in Catastrophe

(NONFICTION)

Wed., 2pm-4pm

The goal of this research seminar is to support the pursuit of topics related to climate change through readings, research, and writing. We will also confront some of the emotional challenges associated with doing work on the environment, especially in these particularly dynamic times. Over the course of the semester, students will create a research portfolio on a climate-related topic and practice integrating climate-related issues into works that are not explicitly climate focused. One key theme we will explore in concert with climate issues is the concept of *time* and how it should be framed in our narratives. Time factors into how we recognize the present era, and it also informs our sense of urgency where there is crisis. As the climate crisis continues to unfold, we face new conflicts with time: ice is melting faster than expected, sea levels rising faster than expected, fires happening more frequently than expected, marine level die-offs happening faster than expected, etc. The urgency with which the facts are now being revealed keeps changing the timelines we must confront, and yet, if we do not understand time—beyond our biological relationship to it—we may miss the opportunity to engage in meaningful work. By studying texts engaged in observational practice in the fields of geology, botany, geography, climate studies, animal studies, and anthropology alongside literary works, we will forge a creative practice that integrates current research with established arguments and/or new narratives. All genres welcome. Some of the texts we will cover include: *Something New Under the Sun* by Alexandra Kleeman; *Rising: Dispatches from the New American Shore* by Lauren Rush; *The Order of Time* by Carlo Rovelli; *The Sixth Extinction* by Elizabeth Kolbert; *The Yellow House* by Sarah Broom; and *In Search of the Canary Tree: The Story of a Scientist, a Cypress, and a Changing World* by Lauren Oakes.

LITERARY TRANSLATION WORKSHOPS

Literary Translation Workshop

Susan Bernofsky

Thu., 10am-12:30pm

Michael Moore

Thu., 4:15pm-6:45pm

Yasmine Seale

Mon., 4:15pm-6:45pm

These workshops are open to students translating from all languages at all levels, from novice to experienced, and within or across all genres: fiction, nonfiction, and poetry. They are designed to introduce or help refine the tools necessary to be an active and engaged translator as well as a rigorous reader of translated literary works, to hone your editing skills across literary genres, and to demonstrate how the art and craft of literary translation can expand your practice as a writer. We will have lively discussions about the role of the translator today, with special attention to translation practice as it intersects with questions of race, migration, and national scripts of exclusion/belonging.

Participants may come with a project already in mind, or may work with the instructor and the group to select projects early on that will be workshopped over the course of the term. The focus will be on close examinations of nuances of style and voice, linguistic play, and methods of representing linguistic and literary innovation in English while actively considering the nature and sociopolitical context of “the original.”

Fluency in a language other than English is not required. A good reading knowledge of a second language is desirable, but students with basic second-language skills who are interested in understanding translation processes and how translation can enhance the craft of writing are also encouraged to register—and to continue improving their second-language skills. Ideally, we will have a group that is committed to examining translation as a tool to dig deeper as a writer, and where notions of expertise and/or mastery are secondary to the willingness to explore and experiment. Readings in translation theory and methodology will be assigned throughout the term based on the different languages and interests students bring to class and the nature of the projects in the group.

LECTURES

Joshua Cohen

Story, Plot, Narrative

(FICTION)

Mon., 1:10pm-3:10pm

What are you trying to tell the reader? This is a story. How are you going to tell it? This is plot. And who is doing the telling? This is narrative. At least -- those will be our working definitions for this class, which will explore the many +1 ways a book can be written through reading some of the classic prose of the last one hundred or so years. No effort will be spared to make these books speak to your own work, and to your own concerns about, for example, personhood (first and third), POV, tense, and pace, with the ultimate hope of relating the medium of words to the medium in which we all write and read (and live and die), which is time.

Jay Deshpande

Turning, Leaping, Digressing: A Poet's Taxonomy of Moves

(POETRY)

Mon., 10am-12pm

In workshop and in conversation, we often describe a poem by its form (sonnet, terza rima, tetrameter, etc.), but things get murkier when it comes to a poem's rhetorical movement. That's because we lack a shared language for the choices that fall between form and content: the space of poetic structure. This course is for anyone who's ever looked at a poem and had no idea what's going on in it; in short, all of us. As we encounter different varieties of turn, leap, and argumentative structure, we will develop a vocabulary that we can apply to almost any poem.

The semester will begin with broader theories about pattern and organization, followed by a close-up scrutiny of syntax and sentence structure. From there, we will begin a week-by-week exploration of rhetorical tactics that will make you a better reader and a more self-aware editor of your own work. Students will complete exercises and write poems to identify and practice the strategies we've explored; the midterm and the final portfolio will provide opportunities to implement the full spectrum of techniques. Along the way we'll read and analyze a wide range of poems from across the lyric tradition, including work by Rae Armantrout, John Keats, Jorie Graham, Tarfia Faizullah, Jack Gilbert, Louise Glück, Marwa Helal, Stanley Kunitz, Srikanth Reddy, Rainer Maria Rilke, Morgan Parker, Alice Notley, and many, many more.

Benjamin Taylor

Reaping the Whirlwind

(NONFICTION)

Thu., 4:15pm-6:15pm

Writers starting out today inherit the world of their grandparents and great-grandparents -- the fearsome, bewildering twentieth century. In this course we read some of the most powerful and

lasting twentieth-century works (along with one nineteenth-century book, which will be our introduction and the forecourt to much that follows, Frederick Douglass's *My Bondage and My Freedom*). Our itinerary runs from the great question of race, our nation's defining crucible; on to the battlefields of World War One; thence to the Spanish Civil War; from there to Stalin's purges and slave-labor camps; on to World War Two and its darkest aspect, the industrialized murder of Europe's Jews; and thence finally to America's long conflict in Vietnam. Our readings are as follows:

My Bondage and My Freedom (Frederick Douglass) (to be completed for the first class session)

Black Boy (Richard Wright)

Good-bye to All That (Robert Graves)

Homage to Catalonia (George Orwell)

Journey into the Whirlwind (Eugenia Ginzburg)

Everything Flows (Vasily Grossman)

Family Lexicon (Natalia Ginzburg)

The Plague (Albert Camus)

Into that Darkness (Gitta Sereny)

The Drowned and the Saved (Primo Levi)

The Quiet American (Graham Greene)

The Things They Carried (Tim O'Brien)

SPECIAL PROJECTS WORKSHOP

Thom Donovan

Tue., 6:30pm-9:30pm

This six-point workshop is designed to provide students with the opportunity and instructional support to develop significant text-based works outside the constraints of genre-specific workshops. While existing Fiction, Nonfiction, and Poetry workshops offer some flexibility in the kinds of work that students are allowed to submit within their genre, the Special Projects Workshop will accommodate new kinds and categories of work by offering an environment with no predetermined generic boundaries or expectations. These projects might include, but are not limited to, verse essays and other cross-genre projects, prose or verse sequences, conceptual projects, works in hybrid forms, procedural and experimental texts, text-based art objects, or any number of other projects that might be best supported, for whatever reason (including special research or production needs), by a balance of vibrant group critique, intensive one-on-one mentorship, and self-guided research and composition.

Unlike most traditional workshops, the Special Projects Workshop will assist students in developing and refining project proposals for their work; these proposals will include a detailed project description that features a rationale, a production schedule, and a bibliography of related reading, viewing, or listening (if applicable). The workshop will ideally bring together students from all three concentrations and facilitate a level of cross-generic conversation—from conception through execution and reception—traditionally not possible within the context of genre-specific workshops.

Students enrolled in a Special Projects Workshop will meet as a group six times throughout the term (four meetings at the start of the term, two at the end) with three or more conferences with the instructor and/or in smaller, focused groups paced out in between. To be considered for the class, students must submit to the department an application no more than three pages in length consisting of the components mentioned above. The application will also be expected to address why the proposed work would be best achieved in the context of a Special Projects Workshop rather than in that of a traditional genre-specific workshop.

MASTER CLASSES

Matthew Burgess

Serious Play: Teaching Imaginative Writing to Young People

6 sessions, 1.5 points – Wednesday, 4:15pm-6:15pm – Sep. 13 to Oct. 18

This master class is designed for writers of all genres who are interested in sharing their love of writing with young people. Children understand that writing is a magical power, and they take pleasure in learning how to do it. But by the time they turn up in high school or college-level composition classes, many have decided that writing is a painful, if necessary, chore. One of the aims of the writer-teacher is to reverse this trend by creating classroom environments in which students (re)discover the creative, expressive, and intellectual potential of language. The point is not to follow rules, avoid mistakes, and fill pages with sentences that hold little or no personal meaning. On the contrary, writing is an act of the mind and the imagination, and it can draw us out of ourselves in ways that are surprising, challenging, and fun. In addition to exploring pedagogical theories, we will examine concrete strategies for designing and leading imaginative writing workshops with students. Play is a central theme, one we will regard as a “serious” pedagogical tool and guiding principal, and class meetings will involve frequent low-stakes, in-class writing experiments. One of the goals for this six-week course is that all participants will feel equipped and excited to adapt what they’ve learned and apply it in a variety of educational contexts.

Lilly Dancyger

Hybrid Memoir

6 sessions, 1.5 points – Thursday, 12:05pm-2:05pm – Oct. 26 to Dec. 7

The journalistic memoir, the true-crime memoir, the braided essay: some of the most compelling personal narratives go beyond the author’s own experience, blurring the lines between memoir and other forms of nonfiction to tell a larger, deeper story.

In this master class, we’ll examine essay- and book-length works of contemporary creative nonfiction that weave personal narrative with something else—including reportage, history, criticism, folktales, and true crime. We’ll discuss different techniques for incorporating the external into the personal, including the personal-critical essay, personal reportage, putting a personal story into a larger cultural context, and research as metaphor; and students will compose an essay or a chapter of a larger work that incorporates an external researched and/or critical element.

Dennard Dayle

Black Comedy

6 sessions, 1.5 points – Friday, 1:10pm-3:10pm – Oct. 27 to Dec. 8

“Sparse title. Does it mean nihilistic humor, or satire by black people?” Both. This master class will tap into comic writing from the American empire’s bleakest perspective (likely third, but this is the hard sell). Each week we’ll look at a different work, discuss what makes it funny (or not), and look for ways to apply their techniques, structures, and gimmicks to our own work. Discussions will be supplemented with in-class exercises applying said tools.

Evan James

Experiments in Process - Nonfiction

6 sessions, 1.5 points – Wednesday, 4:15pm-6:15pm – Sep. 13 to Oct. 18

In this class we will take a hands-on approach to trying out a variety of methods for gathering and shaping the raw material of nonfiction. Making use of a “process notebook,” we’ll experiment with techniques used by practitioners of the personal essay, the memoir, the literary diary, “notes,” and more. We’ll learn from Lynda Barry, Joe Brainard, Anais Nin, Sei Shonagon, Kathleen Collins, Ross Gay, and Carolina Maria de Jesus, among others, examining how these writers transform process-oriented experiments in observation, inquiry, and remembrance into distinctive and fully realized works – works that occasionally trouble the distinction, too, between informality and “polish.” Weekly prompts will focus on cultivating and sustaining a writing practice – largely generative, though with some forays into revision – by using tools and strategies drawn from or suggested by these models.

Jack Lowery

Living Subjects: A Dilemma

6 sessions, 1.5 points – Tuesday, 6:30pm-8:30pm – Sep. 12 to Oct. 17

Most nonfiction writers who know their subjects intimately – whether it be their own friends and family, or a person they’ve developed a relationship with through extensive reporting – would prefer to ignore the question of how their writing will affect their subject and their relationship to them. In this masterclass, we will study how different writers have confronted the dilemma of writing about living people with whom they have (or had) a relationship – subjects who will, in all likelihood, read what has been written about them. What considerations do our living subjects deserve? How do we write the truth, as we see it, while also acknowledging our own subjectivity, differences of perspective, and differences in memory? What accommodations, if any, do we make when rendering our living subjects on the page? All of these questions are complicated by the particulars of the relationship at hand. Do those with a platform, power, or who will have a chance to respond publicly deserve to be written about differently than those who don’t have this access or opportunity? How do we write about a living subject who has caused harm, either to us or to others,

or who we have harmed? How do we write about a living subject whose identity and experiences differ from our own, especially when that subject has a marginalized identity that we don't share? And what does it look like to do all of this ethically? To better understand these questions, we will study examples of both nonfiction writers who have written about living people with whom they already have a relationship, and instances in which the writer, as a reporter, has come to develop a profound and lasting relationship with their subject. The ultimate goal of the course is not to develop a rote or standardized course of action, but to embrace these questions as generative fodder for writing, rather than seeing this dilemma as a barrier or hurdle.

Amy Grace Loyd

The Editing Cycle

6 sessions, 1.5 points – Friday, 1:10pm-3:10pm – Oct. 27 to Dec. 8

“We edit to let the fire show through the smoke”—Arthur Plotnik

Editing and rewriting are an essential and unavoidable part of the writing process. This course will examine the various stages of editing involved in completing, submitting, and publishing your work.

Special attention will be paid to the challenges of editing fiction and creative nonfiction in which understanding the author's intentions for a given piece (that is, its particular voice and style, the way in which a work breaks or conforms to grammatical and craft-based rules, and with what consistency, etc.) is paramount as part of clarifying and communicating those intentions to a reader.

Students will be asked to bring in a short piece or part of a longer piece to share and submit to editing. We'll cover some basics of writing and editing and look at published pieces (excerpts and finished pieces) of fiction and creative nonfiction and how these were edited for a given publication's audience and whether they succeeded and/or failed to gain or persuade a reader, to let the fire show through the smoke.

We'll also discuss the realities of collaborating with professionals editing for a range of venues/audiences and how these variables impact their expectations of your work from a work-in-progress to a publishable product.

Susie Luo

Surprise Me If You Can

6 sessions, 1.5 points – Monday, 11am-1pm – Oct. 2 to Nov. 13

When we read, we want to be surprised. We crave stories that have twists and turns. But what's the difference between those surprises that are compelling and pull us closer to the page, and those that make us feel tricked and prompt us to disengage?

This course will focus on how to make our writing surprise the reader in an emotionally fulfilling way—one that feels seamless and, in hindsight, inevitable. We will explore these surprises in terms of plot, structure, character, and even parse out examples on a line-by-line level. The readings will

mostly be short stories from a wide range of writers, including Ha Jin, George Harrar, and Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni. The final assignment will be a 10-12 page short story that employs surprises in a refreshing way that makes the story itself pop.

Sarah Rothenberg

Music and the Writer's Imagination

6 sessions, 1.5 points – Monday, 10am-12pm – Oct. 23 to Dec. 4

When and why do writers evoke music? How can an attentive musical ear strengthen your writing? This course offers writers a chance to focus on the expressive power of music and to explore musical form from a writerly perspective. With an emphasis on purely instrumental music—music without words—we tackle the challenges of listening and observing, developing creative approaches to capturing and using musical experience. Marcel Proust on the elusive experience of listening gives us a place to begin. Genres of fiction, poetry and nonfiction merge in excerpted readings of key works in which music serves as inspiration: Thomas Mann and Beethoven; Proust's fictional *Vinteuil* Sonata; James Baldwin's blues; Milan Kundera on the art of the novel; poetry of Anna Akhmatova and Rilke. Music of Bach, Beethoven, Chopin, Satie, Debussy, Charlie Parker and others.

I lead much of this class from the piano; live performances interweave with discussion. Students will have weekly assignments of at-home listening, as well as short readings and/or writing, with some writings shared in class.

Leonard Schwartz

Mythography: Writing and the Mythopoetic

6 sessions, 1.5 points – Wednesday, 10am-12pm, & Friday, 1:10pm-3:10pm – Sep. 6 to Sep. 22

The poet Robert Duncan refers to the idea of "The Truth and Life of Myth" in his book *Fictive Certainties*. For Duncan myth itself is seen as a particular way of thinking and feeling in language that encompasses both narrative and visual image, story and certain auras of light. In "fictive certainties", how are these impulses united in a primary way? What is mythopoetic thinking and how does one catch its wave? How can "the truth and life of myth" (as opposed to mere allusion) be drawn from for our own writing, be it in poetry, fiction or creative nonfiction? How write from the black of the page? Certainly the desire to write myth is a dubious proposal, but one can draw from the structure of myth for one's own imaginative work. Readings will include Roberto Calasso's *The Marriage of Cadmus and Harmony*, Sappho's *If Not Winter* and Alice Notley's *The Descent of Alette*, as well as excerpts from Ezra Pound, H.D., and Robert Duncan. Although much of the reading is in poetry, the writing and thinking done here should also be of utility to all writing students.

Salvatore Scibona

Mating: A Novel by Norman Rush

6 sessions, 1.5 points – Tuesday, 6:30pm-8:30pm – Oct. 24 to Dec. 5

Norman Rush's first novel, set in Botswana and published in 1992 when he was fifty-eight, is about an intellectual love affair. Dense with sesquipedalian vocabulary yet fluid as speech, *Mating* manages to be simultaneously a great romance, an adventure story, a novel of ideas, and a work of high style. It was acclaimed in its time and won the National Book Award but has maintained its urgency for new generations of readers ever since. A 2023 *Times* article about its ongoing allure asked, "Is True Love Possible? Readers are Turning to this 1990s Novel for Answers." Its other preoccupations include Marxism, post-colonial African politics, the Cold War, rural development, matriarchy, utopianism, and lust, but little fails to interest the remarkable nameless woman who narrates it. The class will be a close reading of all this long novel contains and a study of the formal and stylistic choices that hold it together and keep it moving. Students will write one brief critical or creative piece in response.

Dinitia Smith

Fiction and Memory

6 sessions, 1.5 points – Wednesday, 4:15pm-6:15pm – Oct. 25 to Dec. 6

This course will examine the ways in which memory is incorporated into fictional narratives. The boundary between the fictive and the remembered is amorphous; all fiction, it has been argued, is in some way autobiographical. The writer takes fragments of his or her own life, slivers of dreams, bits of experience, merging them into a whole to create an imagined work.

The course will include readings which tease the boundaries between fact and fiction, excerpts from Proust, the short stories of Edward P. Jones, Alice Munro, Vladimir Nabokov, Virginia Woolf and others. The emphasis will be on craft. Weekly prompts for short pieces will focus on how memories are assimilated into stories, why the senses such as taste, smell, images of place, memories of music, evolve into fiction, and perhaps will inspire students in their own writing.

Mychal Denzel Smith

The Personal Essay and its Discontents

6 sessions, 1.5 points – Wednesday, 10am-12pm – Sep. 27 to Nov. 1

The self is the first source of inspiration for many essayists, and a site of critique for those who see the personal essay as a lesser literary form. "The personal essay is a genre that is difficult to define but easy to denounce," writes Merve Emre, as the personal essay is often derided for falling victim to solipsism, a lack of ideas, and attention to the mundane trivialities of an individual experience at the expense of thinking about the societal collective. Yet, the personal essay persists, either in spite or because of its critics, with generation after generation of writers taking up the challenge to imbue

the personal essay with the kind of rigor and artistic merit that its critics argue is inherently absent. In this six-week course, we will read across the spectrum of personal essay styles, as well as engage critiques of the form, to explore questions regarding the personal essay's purpose, its limitations and possibilities, the market forces that help shape the idea of what constitutes a personal essay, and whether the personal can be a representative stand-in for anything beyond the individual experience.

Edwin Torres

Room to Roam: Writing the Voice of the Body

6 sessions, 1.5 points – Wednesday, 4:15pm-6:15pm – Oct. 25 to Dec. 6

Where are we located in our writer's world, and how does alignment affirm new openings? As creatures of awareness, writers are receptive beings that embody transition. Part of allowing the creative process its room to roam, is to encourage that search into amazement — to align our natural tri-lingual voice, our *speaking-seeing-hearing* voice, with the human complexities that define us. These six weeks will be structured as a creative laboratory, integrating poetry with movement, sound, and visual art, to expand our communication by exercising the languages inside us. Tectonic fractures, Arvo Part, Anne Hamilton, and realm-building are some of the practices we'll cover. Work will be created, discarded, renewed to explore the sensory edges that embody transformative writing, where the creative process can begin.

James Wood

Fictional Technique in Novellas and Short Stories

4 sessions, 1 point – Wednesday, 4:15pm-6:15pm – Nov. 1 to Nov. 29

In this class we will examine fictional technique in four short texts by Saul Bellow, Muriel Spark, Akhil Sharma, and Lydia Davis. We shall be examining characterization, realism, style, and form, and reflecting on a century of fictional experiment.

Texts:

Saul Bellow, *Collected Stories*

Muriel Spark, *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie*

Akhil Sharma, *Family Life*

Lydia Davis, *Collected Stories*

Matvei Yankelevich

Creative (Mis)translation

4 sessions, 1 point – Wednesday, 4:15pm-6:15pm – Oct. 4 to Oct. 25

Leave fidelity, originality, and translatability at the door, as we enter a world where literature is turned upside-down. Here the chaste vow to respect the inviolable authority of the author and the sacred belief in the hierarchical order of original and translation will be hung out to dry. Here we go out of bounds and offsideways to explore the generative possibilities of bad translation, scandalous paraphrase, treacherous imitation, and further misdeeds of the translator's pen. We'll examine inspired approaches of transgressive translation practices that destabilize "original" texts and conquer canonic works to question the limits imposed by "the task of the translator." Through radical rewritings and abject deviations, we will recuperate volition and agency in the encounter with the original.

Texts we'll use for inspiration may include homophonic translations from the Zukofskys' Catullus to Melnick's *Iliad*; the bad-boy Baudelaire in David Cameron's *Flowers of Bad* and Brandon Brown's *Flowering Mall*; Sawako Nakayasu's "collaboration" with Chika Sagawa; the limit-case of translation in Pierre Menard's *Quixote*; Christian Hawkey's seances with Trakl; and Mónica de la Torre's "repetitions." Come prepared to play and experiment toward the creation of derivative works.

***This course is for writers of all concentrations and descriptions.
Knowledge of a foreign language is not required.***